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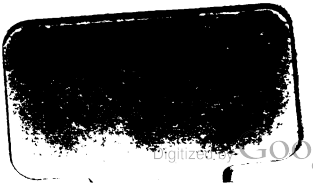

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The

Cause of Poland

in reference to the

International Peace Conference,

to be held at The Hague, Europe.

An Address of the Polish Citizens of the United States of America to the People of North America and all other Civilized Nations.

1899

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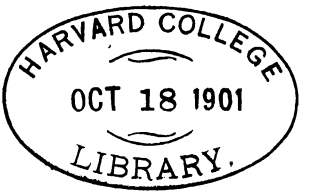

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I.

We have the right and duty to promote the cause of Poland on the Eve of this Conference.

A so-called international conference has been called by the Czar of Russia Nicholas II. for the noble purpose, as Count Muraviev, his minister of foreign affairs, claims, of checking the growth of militarism, lessening the burden of excessive taxation which the people are forced to bear, in order to support useless enormous armies; and also to devise means for avoiding wars in the future which menace civilized communities.

Aside from the question of who the man may be or what motives may animate him, great honor is due undoubtedly to him whose object is to secure to the civilized world the blessings of enduring peace. His project no doubt would find recognition in the official spheres of the certain governments, if they had the right to speak at the coming "international" conference in the name of the governed, and if the interests of the rulers did not frequently conflict with the interests of those ruled.

This conflict of interests, induced the initiator of this "peace conference" to make certain reservations, by which the right to participate in the conference is restricted solely to representatives of governments. Those nations which are dissatisfied with the present state of

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their internal affairs, and are striving to effect a change are to have no voice in the deliberation of this conference. Such a reservation can contribute little to the solution of the question of international peace. If the governments accept this proposed reservation, and reject all discussions of current international politics from the program of this conference, the bone of contention remains, and will always be an obstacle to general disarmament, as long as the controversies between the governors and the governed are not adjusted. These controversies must be adjusted according to the will of the peoples rather than the will of the rulers.

One of the rocks on which the project of preventing further increase of armament of the various great powers, and the desire to secure for Europe the fruits of lasting peace, must inevitably be wrecked, will be the question of redressing the great wrongs perpetrated by the criminal partition of Poland a century ago by three of the first class powers of Europe, who hold until this day the spoils of their unjust possessions. The Polish people under the governments of Russia, Austria and Prussia cannot openly demand that this wrong be righted, because they would lay themselves open to the charge of treason, under the laws of the governments of which they are unwilling subjects. Nevertheless, we the Poles of America as free citizens of the free American Republic, citizens of the United States,which does not maintain a strong standing army, but which is powerful enough to win liberty for an oppressed people, as the late His-

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pano–American war, fought in the interest of the Cubans, demonstrates, do hereby raise our voice in behalf of Poland and appeal to the American people and all other civilized nations of the world. We believe that it is not only our *right*, but our bounden *duty* to raise our voice and demand the restoration of Poland's laws, and political rights for the following reasons:

We belong by our descent to a nation which in spite of its one hundred years of enslavement, has never renounced her inherent and inalienable rights. These rights form a distinct entirety not only in our opinion but even in the opinion of our persecutors, as can be seen by the constant persecutions directed against us, and the whole code of legal enactments tending to limit and paralyze our national development. Moreover this nation has its own distinct characteristics, its own illustrious past history, and its own ideals, and has never renounced its mission of forming a powerful link in the great chain of nations. She has always aimed at reaching the highest round of moral and intellectual perfection. This nation points with pride to her former political importance, to her past and present rich literature, and to her host of men of learning and art. This nation then should not be missing at the peace conference which is so important to all nations, and at which the history, literature and erudition of the various races, should be recognized.

Such a representation it is difficult to secure in view of the fact that Poland, partitioned by three usurp-

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ing powers contrary to all international law, and in violation of the ordinary precepts of honesty, has no visible government. This, however, by no means should constitute a perpetual obstacle to the national fraternization of component parts. It likewise should not deprive a part of this nation from speaking out for the whole, whenever the occasion occurs. Such a voice will always be re-echoed throughout the whole Polish nation, and in the hearts of communities in whose eyes all treaties extorted under the duress of brute force, have no moral worth.

If we concede that what we have adduced above, gives us a *right* to take part in the peace conference we likewise consider it our bounden *duty* to uplift our voice in this cause. There is not a branch of learning, art, nor science, in which the Poles have not contributed their share to the great storehouse of human knowledge. Hence in so vital an affair, as is this peace conference the Polish voice should not be wanting. Unable to express our views before the delegates of the various governments, we have the right, and it is our duty to appeal to the people of the civilized world who are as much interested in the maintenance of "universal peace" as the diplomats in the service of the crowned heads.

It is therefore our opinion, that to root out an evil it is first necessary to ascertain its cause. If we want to put an end to the present unbearable state of armed peace, and the lamentable results of war, with the present perfected implements of warfare, we must consider the fact that the cause of this armed peace is not

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only the fear of an invasion of armed neighbors, into the boundaries of the respective governments, but also, to a great extent, the imperative necessity of enforcing order with an iron hand, or rather of enforcing the existing disorder which enrages upright humanity, though inclined to be most loyal to its own government. The first condition to a partial disarmament and guarantee of universal peace, in our opinion would be the redressing of wrongs perpetrated by certain governments as far as possible, and just. As long as these wrongs exist in their present irritating state, so long will there be a danger of interference from neighboring powers, or else the oppressed at the first opportunity will throw off the yoke which has been forced upon them.

II.

The historic past of Poland.

The political downfall of Poland cannot be viewed in the same light as the downfall of other nations of this earth, as Babylon, Persia, Egypt, the powerful Empire of Rome, or modern Spain, on whose dominions at one time, the sun never set. During the era of her greatest political power the fate of Poland did not depend on the arms of rulers in pursuit of fame and material profit on the field of battle waged in the interests of a dynasty. The mission of Poland was one of peace and true civilization. In the cradle of the nation between the Vistula and the Warta in the ninth century after the birth of

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Christ, there looms from a shroud of myth, the figure of Piast the founder of the first dynasty of our nation. He came from the people, and not the Knight-hood. In his person he represents the tendency of the Polish people to husbandry and mechanical industry, not the martial spirit of blood, conflagration and violence. The title of "Great" was won by only one of the Polish Kings, Casimir, (1333—1370), a descendant of Piast, because this monarch studiously avoided wars, and prefered to merit in the eyes of the people the reputation of the King of Peasants, rather than to win laurels as a great warrior. During his reign the sources of national wealth increased, and internal order was regulated by the famous statutes of Wislica (1347). Poland had an oportunity of showing the inborn feeling of tolerance of her people, by receiving with great hospitality within her boundaries Jews who suffered persecution in other countries, and by uniting to herself the neighboring nation of Ruthenia without imposing upon her her religion, language or customs, (1340—1365).

Through the marriage of Jagiello, the prince of the neighboring nation of Lithuania, with a daughter of the house of Piast, Jadwiga, the dynasty of Jagiello assumed the control of government. The kings of this family were powerful enough to crush the might of the Teutonic Knight who threatened the existence of the Slavonic races. They were brave enough to sacrifice their lives in unfortunate battles or to wage successful wars against the Turks who overran Christian lands in East-

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ern Europe. Hordes of them poured in from Asia under the emblem of the crescent. Their sagacity repelled the incursions of the Muscovite princes, who systematically endeavored to enslave the Slavonian nations of the West and South. The princes of the house of Jagiello were called to fill the thrones of Bohemia and Hungary. Having won renown in the battles of Grunwald (1410), Warna (1444), and Orsa (1534), in defense of the rights of nations, they did not overlook the necessity of founding great institutions of learning. The University of Cracow produced men famous for their learning not only in Poland but throughout the then civilized world. Suffice it to mention in this connection the name of Nicholas Copernicus who "stopped the sun and moved the earth," in order to have some conception of the educational achievements of Poland during the XV-th and XVI-th centuries of the Christian era. Suffice it to mention here also the "Unią Lubelska" (1569) by virtue of which three brotherly peoples united into one organized whole on conditions of granting each other the same laws, equals with equals, regardless of the difference of descent or the difference between the religious ceremonial between the Eastern and Western Churches. Though devotedly attached to the Roman Catholic faith, the nation, owing to the high intellectual standard which prevailed, was permeated with the spirit of tolerance to such an extent that the reformation in Poland was not followed by sanguinary religious wars. The persecuted of other nations, people of other faith, found a safe asylum and a hospit-

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able reception under the protection of the White Eagle. This religious tolerance however did not degenerate into indifference, as is shown by the subsequent defense of Christian nations against the inroads of the Turks, and the victory of John Sobieski at Vienna (1683) where the arms of Poland forever crushed the power of the Mussulman.

The government of Poland was Republican in form, designed as in most other countries to protect the political privileges of Knighthood. This order, represented the people in Poland as well as elsewhere, and the Polish kings whose powers were limited, were mere heads of executive departments, the presidents of the Republic. The power of legislation was vested in the Senate and House of Delegates who formed the diet which came into existence as early as the time of the Piasts, and which had the power to choose kings, to declare war, and make treaties of peace with neighboring governments, even towards the close of the XVI-th century.

During the second half of the last century, when in Europe under the reign of absolute kings and emperors, it became the fashion to advocate theories about "rights of mankind" enunciated by the French socialists; and which caused a universal chaos and bloodshed, Poland adopted a constitution which won the unstinted praise of all civilized nations, a constitution designed to make all classes and creeds equal before the law without curtailing the privileges of nobles who did not belong to the prevailing Catholic belief.

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Whoever desires to appreciate the Polish people and the constitution adopted on the 3-rd day of May, 1791, should go in spirit to those days, and above all consider the difficulty which the initiators of this great work of civilization encountered. Let us cite the opinion of one of the most distinguished contemporaneous statesmen. The distinguished English statesman and philosopher, Edmund Burke, said: "Mankind must rejoice at the great change which has taken place in Poland. Never was a greater and nobler boon conferred on any nation. Ten million people gradually freed themselves not from duties which are only burdensome to depraved characters, but from actual bonds. No one suffered any loss; nobody was debased. Everything was kept in restraint and each one was benefited by such restraint. In this miracle not a drop of blood was shed. It was performed without violence, abuse, quarrel or turmoil; no one was coerced, no one imprisoned. Such was the transition from disorder to order and not from order to disorder."

Similar eulogies of this great masterpiece of statesmanship were delivered by all the great contemporary statesmen and thinkers; such as in England by Fox, Paine, Mackintosh; in France by Volney and Sieyes; in Germany by Herzberg and Baumer. Italian, Dutch and Sweedish and other publicists entertained the same opinion. This achievement of civilization, which entitled Poland to the first place among the nations, was the immediate cause of her political downfall. This unexpected display of zeal for public welfare and civic virtue was neither

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agreeable nor convenient to the neighboring Semi–Asiatic government of Russia whose ambition it was to play the role of a first class power, nor to the unscrupulous government of Prussia which by acquiescence would have lost an opportunity for the further aggrandizement of her territories, nor to that of Austria which desired to recoup herself for the loss of Silesia, sustained in the war with Frederick the Great.

Force, subterfuge, bribery, treason and violence were resorted to destroy Poland struggling for an existence They accused her with affiliating with the French Jacobins, well knowing that the French revolutionists were antagonistic to the principles of this great work of reform. The constitution of May 3-rd was ridiculed as a laughable farce. These powers under the pretext of defending Poland against the greed of her neighbors entered into compacts with Poland which permitted foreign troops to pass through her territories after having first made a secret understanding between themselves for the dismemberment of her territory. Patriots were branded with the nameof traitors. The credulous and corrupt were accorded full protection and called "the real defenders of liberty". Europe amazed and distracted by the French revolution saw the forcible, illegal and violent transfer of the diet from Warsaw to Grodno. Foreign troops which surrounded the assembly halls coerced the delegates into silence and when the delegates were asked to sanction the second partition of their country they treated their silence as assent. No attempt was made to

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secure the consent of the people to the third partition. Full advantage was taken of the great calamities which befell the nation after defeat of the Polish forces under Thaddeus Kosciuszko at Raclawice. Fifteen thousand unarmed citizens were massacred at the suburb of Warsaw in 1794 and all the cities were occupied by the three partitioning powers. With the hand of murder the name of Poland was erased from the map of Europe in 1795. This unparalled crime did not evoke a single protest from civilized and Christian Europe. The consummate diplomacy of Russia, Prussia and Austria closed their eyes to the spectacle of this assassination of a nation. They assured the other European nations that it would result in crushing the French revolution which threatened to affect their internal affairs although the constitution of May 3-rd had no more in common with the principles of the French revolution than the doctrine of that revolution had, with the constitution of the United States of North America, which will for all ages be a source of pride to people living within the boundaries of the land of George Washington. The partition of Poland destroyed the balance of power in Europe, and to it in some measure may be attributed those political convulsions which shook Europe during the time of Napoleon the First. In this great political upheaval the Polish people eager to regain their lost independence, through the logic of events, were compelled to take part and to form Polish legions which won renown in Italy, Spain, Germany, at Moscow, Beresina River and in the "Three days battle of the Emperors at Leipsig".

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III.

The martyrdom of Poland under her despoilers.

A partial restitution of the wrongs perpetrated upon Poland at the close "of the age of philosophers" was made at the congress of Vienna in 1815 when the Kingdom of Poland was constituted and the right of the Polish people, beyond the boundaries of that kingdom in Russian, Prussian and Austrian Poland, to their separate nationality was fully recognized. It however did not bring to Europe the desired peace as it did not satisfy the ambition of the Polish people for a complete restoration of all their rights within their former boundaries. Foreign diplomats who took part in this treaty at Vienna overlooked the fact that the Russians who were ruled despotically by their Czars would not tolerate the political anomaly of having their Czars as kings of Poland submit to laws enacted by the Polish diet. They overlooked also the fact that the Prussian and Austrian governments would treat the conquered provinces with a hand of iron and seek to destroy Polish sentiments and forcibly change Poles into Prussians and Austrians. The natural consequence of the treaty of Vienna was a fierce conflict between despotism and the people,—a conflict similar to the one which now exists between Russia and the Duchy of Finland.

A revolution broke out in Poland in 1830 and 1831 in which the nation refused to submit to the despotism of the Czar and his minions. In the battles of Ostro-

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lenka, Grochow and under the walls of its capital city miracles of bravery were performed. The people however were finally compelled to yield to overwhelming numbers only to be victims of persecution equaling in its enormity and atrocity the persecutions of the Christians during the reign of Nero. The "Vae Victis" of cruel Nicholas First hung over Poland. The remnants of the constitution which was violated by Russian satraps were totally abrogated. The separate government was abolished. Polish regiments were dissolved. The Universities of Warsaw and Wilno were closed. The use of the Polish language in the schools was greatly restricted. Powerful pressure was brought to bear upon the youth to abandon their native language in favor of the Russian. The participants in the insurrection were hung on the gallows or incarcerated in prison or else sent to exile to work at hard labor in Siberia. Under the pretext of taking care of the orphans and children of the victims who were condemned to execution or transportation, all children of the male sex were seized and taken into the interior of Russia to be trained into executioners of their own country. The estates of persons implicated in this insurrection were confiscated and given to Russian generals. The historic names and boundaries of former provinces were abolished and changed into Russian, "Gubernia." The education of the youth was impeded. The history of their fatherland was falsified. Commercial enterprise was discouraged and the religious feelings of the Poles were outraged. Clergymen were

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persecuted, while Catholic bishops were denied the right of communicating with the head of their church in Rome. It would be very difficult to describe in a few words all the persecution which took place. To merely enumerate all the instances fully corroborated by official documents would fill many volumes. It finally culminated in the insurrection of 1863. This insurrection was an act of national despair. Without fortifications, artillery, supplies, provisions or ammunition, or funds necessary for the successful conduct of war, the nation threw itself upon Russia which was bound to Austria and Prussia by the ties of the Holy alliance. Unarmed, the Poles rushed upon the giant of Northern Europe who had under his disposition an army numbering millions and thwarted him for over a year disregarding the consequences of the insurrection, Those consequences indeed were terrible. It did not satisfy this tyrannical government to deprive Poland of the remnants of her rights and her separate national existence. It sought to eradicate their religious faith and language, to destroy their customs and traditions, abolish their judicial system, undermine their welfare and destroy all the sources of national wealth. Lands were confiscated. Poles were denied the right to hold public offices. Their right to existence was recognized only so long as the people would renounce their ideals and in so far as they would submit absolutely in spirit to the ukase of the Czars and be reconciled with the fact that their native land was merely a province of the great Russian empire, in accordance

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with the last will and testament of Peter the Great who directed his commanders to Russianize all the Slavonic nations.

After 1863, Milutyn and Prince Czerkaski played the same role in Poland which Count Paszkiewicz Erwanski enacted in 1831. The name of the kingdom of Poland was changed to the By Vistulian Province. Schools were entirely reorganized and the instruction of the Polish language was prohibited. The speaking of Polish in official circles was punished as a crime. The Catholic church was prohibited to own property and convents were closed. To forestall the declaration of the secret Central Polish Government, peasants were emancipated in order to ruin the nobility. Priests and bishops without a judicial trial, without the slightest evidence presented against them, were transported to Siberia at the caprice and behest of some subservient official.

Of the great number of executioners whom the Czar of Russia sent to suppress the insurrection of 1863 in Poland, General Michael Muravieff, called by his own countrymen "The Hangman" surpassed all others in cruelty and bloodthirstiness. Recently at the instigation of the government a monument was erected to the memory of this same man in the principal seat of his crimes, — Wilno, the capital of Lithuania: of which he was governor-general less than two years. As he himself relates in his memoirs he ordered during that brief period one hundred and seventy people to be either shot or hung; 172 were transported to Siberia; 1437 were im-

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prisoned; 1539 condemned for permanent settlement in Siberia, and 4696 condemned to live permanently in the interior of Russia. He razed over thirty peasant villages and a great many more dwellings of the nobility. How many unarmed people his armies killed in their attacks on settlements or castles without legal process, Muravieff in his memoirs failed to state. Vengeance was wreaked upon the unfortunates who were driven under the knout to imprisonment or transportation to Siberia. Priests were forcibly seized from their altars. Women were outraged! Dwellings were robbed and burned, grain in fields was destroyed. Flames and ruins could only be seen where once stood cottages and palaces. A worthy follower of Muravieff in Lithuania was Kaufman. In Ruthenia Governor Boszak faithfully followed their example. Thus did Russia strive to unite Lithuania to herself in this the nineteenth century of christianity and civilization, — the same Lithuania which without the least violence, inhuman treatment or bloodshed with the baptism and blessings of liberty, enlightenment, equality and christianity was united to Poland five centuries before.

Following the barbarous example of Russia, "Constitutional" Prussia did not hesitate to resort to force and violence to crush the spirit of the nation, notwithstanding the pledges of the treaty of Vienna of 1815 and the rights fully recognized by the kings of Prussia during the earlier part of the present century. The freedom of faith, the liberty of speech, the right of form-

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ing organizations is denied to the Polish people in Prussian Poland. Beautiful indeed were sentiments of the great founder of the present German Empire, Prince Bismarck, when he said: "Nations come from God and he who attempts to eradicate any nationality sins against God; and the nation which seizes such means is not a Christian nation". He did not however apply these admirable sentiments to the Polish people for whom he only had an iron fist. In vain have the Polish delegates in Prussian Parliament demanded justice for their brethren. The Polish language in the schools was abolished. The young men are removed from the influence of Polish Catholic priests, All meetings in which any discussion takes place about the Polish language are immediately dissolved. The editors and publishers of periodicals are constantly subjected to law-suits, fines and imprisonment. A fund amounting to millions and derived from the Polish people has been devoted to colonizing Polish Catholic districts with German Protestant settlers. In violation of the provisions of the treaty of Vienna of 1815 guaranteeing certain privileges of the Polish people within their own country, 40,000 Poles were expelled from Prussian Poland. During last year a convention of Polish physicians in Posen was prohibited. The learned doctors from the two other parts of Poland were notified that they would be immediately expelled as vagrants if they dared to disobey the barbarous order of the ministry representing the nation which pretended to excel all other nations in its culture. The French writer,

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Wilbort, felt forced to sketch the picture of our misfortunes in the following words, which but faintly describe the present situation.

"The situation in Poland beyond all doubt appears so distant, strange and incredible; truth and phantasy so blended with the occurrences of every day that one hundred years from now the historian who would desire to describe this terrible and harrowing drama will pause in amazement and ask himself whether he was not under the influence of some sanguinary halucination, whether this strange and terrible epoch is not the creature of some insane imagination. Certainly this struggle, this crucifixion of a nation lasting over a century; this endless suffering, this grave which is always open, this heroism which carries with it more and more energy in torture, this patriotism in spite of all persecutions challenging death; this awful crime which has stained humanity; this incomparable crown of glory which Poland bears on her Golgotha, is not this drama worthy alone of the genius of a Homer or a Tacitus?"

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IV.

The present position of the Poles among the civilized People.

The above words of the French writer demonstrate that although the Polish people has been oppressed both spiritually and materially for over a century their national spirit is invincible and that the sad eventuality of eradicating the Polish sentiment, towards which the severe measures of the Russian and German statesmen are directed, will never occur; that at the inception of any event of historical importance in the field of international politics there will appear to the governments and nations the spectacle of Poland like a phoenix arising from her ashes.

This is truly worthy of wonder. When Poland extended from the Baltic sea to the Tatra Mountains and from the Dnieper to the Dwina her population numbered about fourteen million inhabitants including Lithuanians, Ruthenians, Germans, Jews and other nationalities. At the time of the partition our population was computed at eight millions. Present statistics show that the population of Russian Poland is twelve million, Prussian Poland three million and Austrian Poland four million. Adding to these the emigrants who either through compulsion or of their own volition have scattered throughout the whole world, more particularly those in North America, the figure of twenty million native born Poles will be reached. With the Ruthenians and Lithuanians who have voluntarily united to Poland and formed one

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body politic, there are today about thirty million descendants of the people who owe or owed allegiance to Poland. With this growth of Polish population grew the national spirit, and the sentiment for a separate national existence. This sentiment is evidenced in those provinces which centuries ago were regarded as lost to Poland; Prussian and Austrian Silesia and the Provinces occupied by the Kasubes and Prussian Mazurs are striking examples. This spirit and this feeling comes from a love of country which is implanted by nature and nurtured by their leaders in all the fields of science, art and intellectual achievement, leaders who have obtained recognition from all the intelligent people of the world.

Though their schools in the Russian and Prussian provinces are not conducted in accordance with their ideas, they nevertheless possess their periodicals which spread learning and instil in the minds of their compatriots a true comprehension of their rights and duties to their native land. Over three hundred publications of various forms and character—many in editions of thousands—are sent to the homes of the peasants, the palaces of the noblemen and the cottages of the laborers and mechanics. In these publications the Polish people learn that though they are oppressed in the arena of public life, they must never abandon their national aspirations.

An illustrious example of this spirit is the immortal Polish poet, Adam Mickiewicz, who was surrounded by a pleiad of contemporary poets, novelists, dramatists, thinkers, sages, whose names were almost as well known

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to the world as that of Henryk Sienkiewicz whose works have been translated in most of the modern languages. Beside this group of Polish writers there is another group representing art. Matejko and Siemiradzki are the masters of the Polish pencil; not far from them in the niche of fame must be alloted a place to those masters of the Polish chisel, Godebski and Baroncz.

Chopin, Moniuszko, Wieniawski and Paderewski as original composers and performers of the works of other masters have charmed throngs of worshippers of music. Sembrich–Kochanska, Mierzwinski and the De Reszke Brothers astonish musical audiences with their incomparable voices. In Madame Modjeska, the stage possesses a worthy representative, who was equalled by her two predecessors, Krolikowski and Ziolkowski. The young inventor Szczepanik has justly been compared to Edison. Our historian Lelewel enjoyed the confidence and friendship of the King of Belgium. Our great financier, Walewski left an impress upon the economic thought of France. Napoleon Third, often sought the advice of Prince Czartoryski, while our geologist, Dunikowski has been entrusted by the Austrian and French governments with special missions in his field of labor. Our representatives in the parliaments, Kantak, Niegolewski, Czarlinski, Motty and Rev. Jazdzewski have been untiring in their efforts to secure redress for the wrongs suffered by Poland and the Polish people. Polish strategists like Dombrowski, Prince Poniatowski, Generals Mieroslawski, Bem, Bosak–Hauke, Smolinski and others, directed the move-

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ments of the armies of various nations in international conflicts and were worthy successors of Kosciuszko and Pulaski who contributed in no small measure to the independence of the United States of North America. The Polish statesmen, Dunajewski, Bielinski, Sapieha, Badeni, Goluchowski directed and to this day direct the foreign and domestic policies of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Czar Nicholas II. first obtained his idea of calling an international peace conference from the works of the Polish economist Bloch, the author of the important work, "The Future War." Cardinal Ledochowski, the Prefect of the Propaganda, who is the chief adviser as well as the executor of the will of the Head of the Roman Catholic church, represents in his person the Polish Episcopacy which during the most critical, as well as prosperous periods in the history of Poland formed the main medium for the preservation of the national spirit and ideas. This rich pantheon of our nation potently demonstrates the vitality of the Polish people and their right to a separate existence. There has not been a single field of human activity which tends to the advancement of civilization in which they have not participated and rendered signal services to humanity. For this reason the Polish people ought to be represented at the International conference.

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V.

Only the triumph of justice can secure universal peace.

The governments have not, it is true, agreed to review the question of the existing status of domestic affairs at the coming conference. It appears to us that an eventuality will transpire which will make such a restriction impossible. If the delegates representing the governments will follow strictly the restrictions of the Czar's plans the conference will end in nothing; not even attaining the modest result of a partial disarmament or a declaration of truce for five years. We do not doubt that at the outset the delegates will endeavor to strictly adhere to the outlined program and no mention will be made of existing national political affairs. In all probability a great deal of time will be consumed in preliminary discussions but at some time the question will arise of determining the size of the armies which each government will be permitted to keep under arms during times of peace. Beyond all doubt a lively discussion will follow. The delegates from each country will demand the right to have a much larger force on a peace footing than the delegates from other nations will deem it to be necessary to maintain. In such a discussion every delegate will have to justify his request and in their arguments dwell upon the internal as well as the external affairs of their country. Then the delegates will of necessity pass beyond the restriction of the outlined program and the gory form of Poland, like Banquo's

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Ghost, will appear to torment her assassins. This martyr with more than ten centuries of glorious history; a century of suffering and struggle for existence, as has been briefly described in this sketch, will demand the same right as other nations of assuring to mankind universal peace. At the same time she will also say that no universal peace can be expected until justice is done and Poland assumes her true place in the Areopagus of free and independent nations. Unless justice is meted to her no thought can be given of reconciling the wronged people to their sad lot. To attain their object they will take advantage of the latest inventions for annihilating life in order to strike terror in the hearts of those who have outraged them, even though such conduct may not be consistent with their national character. History proves that the Polish people was not a believer in force or in the use of destructive weapons to vindicate their rights. To the last moment of their political existence they looked with contempt upon all destructive weapons. They prized individual courage much higher. They attacked the enemy with sword in hand, abhorring those who hid in trenches under the protection of batteries. When the other nations of Europe relied mainly upon powerful artilleries for the success of their troops, Poland too proud and placing too high the honor of military calling looked with disdain upon those who were willing to kill and dared not to expose themselves. In view of the greed of the neighboring powers this characteristic trait of our nation did not redound to our advantage. Nevertheless

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it existed and was one of the brightest features of our history. Poland was a great power. She seized the sword only when she felt aggrieved. It may be that sometimes, under great provocations, her exalted idea of national honor impelled her to engage in warfare, but as soon as her honor was fully satisfied she returned to her former ancient boundaries. The Polish arms were in Moscow, Sweden, Denmark, Moldavia and Vienna, but never was an attempt made to enrich her at the expense of the territories of her defeated foes. Polish troops returned to Warsaw, Cracow, Posen, Lemberg and Wilno with a feeling of satisfaction bred from a consciousness of duty faithfully performed. Often the Polish people were criticized as visionary idealists, who failed to take advantage of their opportunities. However, any impartial man must acknowledge the consistency of acts based on principles of true Christian ethics, which do not permit us to upply one rule of action to private conduct and another to public affairs. Such arguments would be futile to the minds of the modern diplomatic world, even if Poland had a voice in the conference summoned by Nicholas II. With such arguments, however, in the name of Poland we appeal—we Polish citizens of America many of whom have voluntarily and others have been compelled to leave their native land and who have received hospitable treatment in the United States, availing ourselves of a civilization based upon true principles of liberty, to which our countrymen and representatives of other nations contributed, wishing to all nations of the world

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the same freedom, — especially to Poland, which would not tolerate slavery at a time when the common people of other European nations were victims of the shameful greed of the privileged classes, upon whom the crowned rulers depended. These rulers will not contribute today to the inauguration of universal peace, because a limitation on their means of defence would not be in consonance with their selfish views. Universal peace will only reign when the vital interests of the civilized people are prized higher than the interests of reigning dynasties. Then it will be perceived that one of the principal conditions of disarmament of troops and the rule of universal peace will be the restoration of Poland to her inalienable and inherent rights. For this event so essential to the interests of peace and the advancement of civilization so consonant with all sentiment of justice we pray for in the name of Poland which has been crowned with the thorny wreaths of undeserved martyrdom on her Golgotha. Appealing to all the nations which through their sympathies, aided the Greeks to regain their freedom, which condemned Napoleon the Great when he tried to destroy the liberties of Spain, Italy, Sweden, Austria, Prussia and Russia; which looked with abhorrence when North Schleswig was seized from Denmark; Savoy from Italy; Alsace Lorraine from France, which have also evinced their sympathy for the oppressed in the struggles of the Irish people and the Balkan Slavonians to secure their deserved rights, which greeted with joy the standard of freedom as it waved in Cuba, and which regard Wash-

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ington, Lincoln and Gladstone higher than Napoleon the Great, Metternich or the Iron Chancellor Bismarck. From these nations alone can we expect the triumph of justice and the realization of the hope that the martyr on the Polish Golgotha will arise from her grave and the dream of universal peace be consummated.

The undersigned representatives of the Polish Press and Organizations in the United States of North America, having received intelligence of a Conference convoked by the Czar of Russia, Nicholas II. to The Hague, have resolved to present on behalf of the Polish citizens of the United States to the civilized people of the world the foregoing memorial in reference to the cause of Poland in order to recall the wrongs perpetrated upon the Polish nation. Unless these wrongs are redressed we believe that the Conference cannot be regarded as a sincere effort to secure that universal peace and justice, which tends to end all homicidal conflicts.

Chicago, May 1-st 1899.

Respectfully Submitted,

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